

FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD

Interesting Experiments of a Young French Physician.

A Guillotined French Anarchist Gives a Description of Spirit Life.

Experiments in "occultism"—spiritualism we call it in America—have for some time, writes the Paris correspondent of the Philadelphia Times, been in vogue in Paris. Dr. Charcot, shortly before his death, thought physicians would do well even to stop talking of hypnotism for the good of society. The following is of very recent occurrence. The uneasy spirit of Emile Henry which appears in it may be considered, at the reader's choice, as good or bad, or an imposter, or else the result of "suggestion." It is certainly not mere imagination.

N. is a young Paris doctor of more than ordinary ability. Unlike many of his comrades, he not only believes in a soul but also in the possibility of spiritualist communication. He has had a scientific training in Charcot's experiments with hysterical and hypnotic patients, and he is thoroughly acquainted with the ways of the mediums. He is beyond suspicion of imposture, and his training ought to keep him from being duped easily.

Miss X. is a young lady 18 years of age, a remarkable violinist and beautiful. She is in that nervous state which is so common among both Parisian and American fine ladies, and which is known as neurasthenia. Dr. N. is the regular physician of Miss X.

Miss X. was present all through the trial of Emile Henry. Neither before nor since has she been known to express any sympathy with anarchist ideas, but she became greatly impressed with the keen intelligence and determined words of the young bomb thrower. It will be remembered that Henry, who had a university education, was allowed to defend his deeds and doctrines in a speech that is perhaps the clearest exposition of anarchy yet given to the world. It was especially the savage intensity of this speech which seemed to burn in the brain of Miss X. In the impossibility of saving this strange criminal from death, his presence nevermore quitted her thoughts. It was a case of what demologists call "obsession."

The first distinct "telepathic" phenomenon (this is what Dr. N. chooses to call it) took place in the morning and at the very moment when Emile Henry's head fell under the knife of the guillotine. Miss X. was in bed and asleep. She could scarcely have known it was the morning of the execution, as the hour was early and even the members of the press had been informed of it only after

midnight. She awoke suddenly and believed that she saw in the mirror hanging opposite her bed the severed head of Henry.

Some time afterward Dr. N. cast her into the magnetic sleep, as he was accustomed to do. In this state to his great surprise, she was no longer docile to his own suggestions, but imagined herself to be Emile Henry in person. She began, in clear words and with a feverish eloquence like that of Henry himself, to explain his ideas about society.

Dr. N., who is nothing if not daring, at once conceived a plan of putting himself in communication with the spirit of Emile Henry through Miss X., whom he believed to be a medium wonderfully ready to his hand. He resolved to model his first experiments on the lines of the famous triptych, "Sensations of a Guillotined Head," by the mad painter, Wiertz, of Brussels. A great lady of Paris, who is much preoccupied with occult phenomena, lent her salon for the occasion. A dozen guests were invited to be the witnesses, all skeptics, but persons of known good faith and willing to judge impartially. All these agree in what they actually saw and heard without pronouncing on the cause of the phenomena.

It was late on Saturday night, or rather Sunday morning. The doctor had unusual difficulty with his magnetic passes, and it was only toward 2:30 o'clock, when the spectators were already well nigh discouraged, that Miss X. seemed at last to fall into a deep sleep. Dr. N. then touched her forehead and her eyes suddenly opened. The witnesses were shocked at the change wrought in her features. Their usual sweet expression had given place to something harsh and masculine, her naturally bright blue eyes had become lusterless, while her lips had completely lost their color and were trembling.

"Henry, is it you?"

The trembling lips seemed unable to form an answer.

"I am not here; your question is absurd. I am not in a place. I act on the person who answers you."

"You are really Emile Henry?"

"I am obliged to answer yes, although the answer is not exact."

"Is that which is acting on Miss X. at this moment your soul separated from your body?"

After a long silence the answer came:

"I am going to try to explain. There is 'soul' as there is electricity. A part of this element is set in motion during the first moments of the formation of the human body, just as electric phenomena are produced by certain combinations metallic or otherwise."

"Do you mean to say that, after death,

that which was the soul of man returns to the general mass of what you call an element?"

"No, for that portion of the element has been personalized forever."

"Do you see what is passing on earth?"

"No more than when, on earth, I saw what was passing in what you call the world of spirits."

"By what phenomena has your personalized soul substituted itself for that of Miss X.?"

"It is not a substitution. Among you there are double souls and triple souls. Certain acts of yours, which seem inexplicable to yourselves, are the work of souls superposed to your own."

Here the voice grew very weak.

"Explain yourself better."

"It is impossible for me."

"Why?"

"Because there are things which I conceive and which your ordinary and even your scientific language is powerless to express."

"Do you remember what happened during your life?"

"My life appears to me, whole and entire, absolutely after the fashion of one general view."

"Will you tell us what you experienced at the moment of your execution?"

"Already, on the eve, the thought of dying for my opinions caused me a kind of fierce pleasure. If I seemed afraid, it was because of a dream I was having at the moment they came to wake me."

"Will you tell us what the dream was?"

"Do not ask me again, or I shall cease replying to any of your questions."

"Is death by decapitation painful?"

"No death is painful, and I no longer understand how mankind discusses such questions."

"What happens when material life has ceased?"

"Another life begins, but one which words intelligible to you could not describe exactly."

"Are you wiser than you were during your life?"

"I have a multitude of notions which were then strange to me, but which many living men might have if they meditated more deeply and abstracted themselves completely from what surrounds them."

"What do you think now of the doctrines which you professed during your life?"

Here there was a long silence.

"Do you repent of what you did?"

"There is no more repentance possible after death, because there is no more free will. I know that I acted contrary to the ends of my creation, but I can not even desire to have acted otherwise."

"You were an atheist while alive. Are you still one?"